

# What is Shared Living?



Shared Living is exactly that: people sharing their lives by living together under the same roof as a family. Shared Living is highly personalized and offers people with disabilities a great opportunity to choose the person(s) with whom they will live and have a lot of control over how they live their day-to-day lives.

There are many different arrangements that can be developed based on the needs of the person and their situation. The person who lives with and provides support to the person with a disability is called the “Shared Living Provider”. The Shared Living Provider lives with the person and provides whatever support(s) the person needs in their day-to-day activities. Many Shared Living Providers work outside the home, and continue to have some time to enjoy on their own. Most people with disabilities in Shared Living either work or volunteer in the community and have some type of a day program. A Shared Living Arrangement is usually in the Shared Living Provider’s home/apartment, but it could also be possible in the individual’s home/apartment.

Some examples of a Shared Living arrangement include:

- Ralph, a 53 year-old man, who lives with Tom, a 65-year old retired widower. They both love to play golf and fish.
- Ellen, a 35 year-old woman with a full-time job, lives in the home of Frank and Betty, who have 4 year old twins and who are very active in many of their community events including the annual parade.



- Jim, a 48 year-old man, lives with a married couple where the wife still works but the husband is retired with lots of spare time.
- Lynne, a 27 year-old woman leaving home for the first time, shares an apartment with Sarah, a 28 year-old single professional.
- Pam and Tony, a young married couple, live in an in-law apartment in the home of Betty and Fred who are empty nesters.

Shared Living Arrangements can have a significant positive impact on the quality of life of people with disabilities. While the benefit to the person is the driving force behind this option, there are other notable benefits as well. It is a nice way for individuals and families who are open to sharing their homes and lives with the “right someone” to enhance their household income. People in families and communities come to know and appreciate the people with disabilities who are living in Shared Living Arrangements. As a result, all people with disabilities benefit from the increased community awareness of the value, potential and many contributions people with disabilities can make to their communities.

## **How do I get involved in a Shared Living Arrangement?**



**If you want to become a Shared Living Provider:** You can do this through an Authorized Placement Agency for Shared Living! These agencies will recruit, train and administer individuals as Shared Living Providers. However, the role of the Shared Living Provider is not the same as the traditional foster care role of providing basic care in a family atmosphere. A Shared Living Provider’s role entails that of an advocate, friend, mentor and support provider, who will not only share their home with a person with a developmental disability, but will assist the individual with connecting to the community, teaching new skills, developing friendships and making life choices that will lead to a satisfying, safe and productive lifestyle.



**If you are a person with a disability who would like to move into a Shared Living Arrangement:** Please contact the Division of Developmental Disabilities to inquire into this type of living arrangement. If assistance is needed, please feel free to ask someone with whom you feel comfortable to help you make the initial contact.



**If you already know someone you would like to share your life with through a Shared Living Arrangement:** It may be possible! There are certain requirements such as background checks of all adults in the home, as well as certain home safety requirements. Many successful arrangements have occurred between people who enjoy one another’s company and want to share their lives in a bigger and better way.

For further information, please contact:

Nicole Boisvert @ 401-462-6024

or check out our link of approved agencies at

<http://www.mhrh.ri.gov/ddd/pdf/AuthorizedAgencies.pdf>